A Thousand Splendid Suns

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Summary Entry #4

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When we last left off with laila, she had gotten shrapnel damage from bomb that had been let loose on her house killing her mother and father on moving day. When she awakes she is being taken care of by nurses in a hospital in Kabul. She is recovering slowly and soon has visitors. A man has been sent by another man named Rasheed to give her sad news. Tariq, the love of her life and the father of her soon to be born baby, is dead. After a little of negotiation, Laila decides to go with this man and meet Rasheed. She hopes to go to work or even marry him to make up for the loss of Tariq. When she gets to his home, Rasheed is waiting with his wife, Mariam. Mariam is the other young women who we saw from her perspective in the first part of the book. Mariam is none too happy about the coming of this new girl into the house. Rasheed goes on with marrying Laila and Mariam is as pessimistic as can be. The two wives stay out of each others’ ways splitting up the chores. Rasheed is intrigued by Laila because she is young and smart and beautiful. He proclaims that to seal the marriage they must consummate. Laila devises a plan where she hides a knife by the bed. When the deed was done she pulled out the knife and pricked her finger and allowed blood to fall on the mattress in the crevice where they were laying to have the appearance that she was indeed a virgin. As the weeks went by the tension in the house grew as Mariam and Laila had had their own skirmishes about chores and getting Rasheeds attention. Mariam declares she will kill Laila before she stills Rasheed away. But that was never Laila’s intentions. As she tries to make peace with Mariam, denial becomes more and harder to deal with for the new wife. I never was a fan of how Mariam was acting towards Laila. Sometimes they fought over stupid stuff and bickered for days. Rasheed was no help either. He showed so much more attention to Laila than he did to Mariam and it was not fair at all. I was waiting for the chapter when they would both finally come together and be friends.

Soon after, Laila gave birth to her daughter Aziza. This was the pivotal point in the entire house hold and is what brought Laila and Mariam together. Mariam was not a huge fan of Aziza and would not help out. Laila spent countless nights up with the baby while she was crying and wanted to be fed. Rasheed was fed up with the baby and was threatening to give it away but Laila wouldn’t have that. Until one day when Laila found clothing, that she later found out was from Mariam, near her baby that was the perfect size. Laila thanked Mariam but she didn’t want this to turn into an everyday thing. Mariam soon started to saddle up next to the baby because it was the only one that had shown affection for her. Then one night Laila offered Mariam to sit and have tea with her to talk about things. This is when they became the best of friends. From then on they did everything together. They split up the chores, taking care of the baby, and also dealing with Rasheed. He was getting suspicious that the girls were plotting against him and forming an alliance. A couple nights out of the week he had his way with one of them while the other was doing chores. He tried to stop them from being together as much as possible. While all of this was going on Laila would sneek into Rasheeds wallet and steal money in hope that one day she would be able to leave and escape from Rasheed. She hoped to save up some money and then sell her wedding ring to pay for the rest.

As time passed and Aziza grew older, Mariam grew quite the bond with Aziza. Those two were insepperable. Laila loved the help and also then she didn’t have to do all of the chores around the house. Soon Laila was giving birth to her son, Zalami. She grew to love him just as much as Aziza. Rasheed also grew a liking to Zalami. Now that Aziza was older she could help with chores. This brought up more conflict within the household and mad their relationship with Rasheed more violent. He began beating them for no reason because he thought they were both trying to get rid of him. They both took the beatings and went on with life. When Laila finally had enough money to leave she invited Mariam to come with her and she accepted. It was illegal for women to travel alone so they had to find a man that would disguise as their uncle. Laila found a man that would do it and buy their tickets. When they went to get on the train, a man called her, Aziza, and Mariam aside. They all got called in for questioning. Apparently the guy who bought their tickets and was going to play as their uncle tipped off the police and ratted them out. They all got beaten and were sent home. The policed stayed until Rasheed got home and they informed him of their attempts to leave and he was furious. He beat both Mariam and Laila with his belt and gave them nasty bruises. I was appalled at how women were treated in this book. For them this was natural and not against the law. I would never ever think about doing this to anyone none the less a girl. Then once the Taliban came in power there were more restrictions on the girls. They were never to leave the house unless with a male and they had to pray five times a day. Rasheed was on cloud nine and was loving life now that his wives had even less power.

Soon after, Rasheeds shop caught fire and he came home and made Laila give Aziza up. Aziza and Zalami were just becoming good friends and Zalami was really upset by this. They all traveled to an orphanage a couple blocks away in a different district and left Laila there until Rasheed could make enough money to be able to support her some more. Laila was a mess after this and missed her daughter very much. Over the next couple of weeks she tried to go visit her but Rasheed always made an excuse as to why he couldn’t. Then she took matters into her own hands. She went by herself. Well aware of the danger that could come she went anyway. The Talib police would beat her because she was alone and send her home. Then she would try to go different ways to get around the police but she would only come face to face with more beatings. One day she and mariam found their way to the orphanage and visited Aziza. They were happy when they rejoiced and spent hours together. When it was time to leave a man was standing on the side of the building. It was Tariq. Rasheed had lied to Laila and Tariq was actually alive. What Rasheed didn’t know was that Aziza wasn’t his baby but Tariq’s. Tariq and Laila talked for a while before parting but this wouldn’t be the last meeting. He came over when Rasheed was at work. He asked her to leave with him because he made a mistake by leaving her the first time. He wasn’t going to let that happen again. She couldn’t because Rasheed would become even more furious. So they just stayed as friends and talked for days on end. Rasheed held a yard sale one day to bring in more money and sold just about everything. Soon they were able to bring Aziza back home. One night at dinner, Zalami told his father that Tariq was coming over but only by accident. Rasheed became enthralled with rage and started to beat Laila. Mariam tried to join and help but she wasn’t strong enough. She saw a murderer in her husband’s eye and ran out to the shed to get the shovel. When she came back Rasheed was strangling her and she hit him in the face with the shovel. The next swing she wanted to make lethal so she turned to the sharp edge and hit him one more time and killed him. At this point I wanted to jump out of my seat with joy. I was so tired of Rasheed and I absolutely despised his character and I loved the other four. When he was killed I was relieved and new the story would go smoothly now.

Well I was wrong. Mariam did not want to leave with Laila. They had buried his body in the back yard and were getting ready to leave the house for good. Zalami was upset with Mariam and wouldn’t speak to her. Mariam knew the police would come looking for them and she didn’t want that hindering their chances of getting away. Laila and Tariq had already planned to leave together early in the week. Mariam ended up staying even after the countless hours of begging from Laila. Mariam was sent to jail and was sentenced to death. I was sad to see Mariam go because she was like Laila’s mom and they loved each other. She did the right thing by letting them go because now they could live a happier life. She went valiantly though. I am very interested in how Laila and Tariq do with their lives together now. I am looking forward to reading the last section of the book.